



Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office

Family Services

Michigan Hall of Justice

P.O. Box 30048

Lansing, Michigan 48909

Phone (517) 373-5975

Daniel J. Wright
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 31, 2008

TO: Chief Circuit Judges

cc: Presiding Family Division Judges
Circuit Court Administrators
Family Division Administrators

FROM: Daniel J. Wright

RE: Survey for Judges and Court Staff
Interstate Placement of Foster Children

As a condition of receiving the Court Improvement Program grant, state courts are required to assess their role, responsibilities, and effectiveness in the interstate placement of foster children, and to implement improvements to expedite these placements. Specifically, state courts must assess (a) the effectiveness of their laws pertaining to information sharing with out-of-state courts, (b) the methods available for obtaining information and testimony from agencies and parties in other states without requiring travel, and (c) the procedures to permit parents, children, attorneys, and others to participate in cases without requiring interstate travel. The assessment must also identify any legal barriers that prevent timely judicial decisions regarding interstate placement. The State Court Administrative Office Family Services division must submit a Michigan assessment summary report to the federal government by June 30, 2008.

As part of this assessment process, we request that judges and/or court staff familiar with the interstate placement process fill out the attached questionnaire and return it no later than February 18, 2008, to Family Services Management Analyst Kelly Howard. Please direct questions to Kelly at (517) 373-5975. Thank you for your participation.

Judges / Court Staff Survey
Interstate Compact for the Placement of Foster Children (ICPC)

1. Have you had any cases in the previous 12 months in which the child was placed in out-of-state foster care or adoption?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. How do you conduct review hearings for out-of-state placements without requiring parties, attorneys, and caseworkers to travel? (check all that apply)
☐ Telephone conference ☐ Video conference ☐ Written testimony
☐ Other _____
3. Does your court have video equipment available for video depositions or testimony?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. How are out-of-state parties sworn in for testimony when the hearing is conducted by conference call or videoconference? (check all that apply)
☐ The parties are sworn in by the other state ☐ By the Michigan jurist during the conference ☐ Other _____
5. What evidence regarding the placement do you require from other states? (check all that apply)
☐ Written report ☐ Verbal testimony ☐ Photos ☐ Videos ☐ Audio tapes ☐ Other _____
6. What are your acceptable methods for receiving information from the other state? (check all that apply)
☐ Facsimile ☐ Regular mail ☐ Certified mail ☐ Email ☐ Phone call
☐ All information must go through the DHS Interstate office. We do not accept information directly from other states.
☐ Other _____
7. How do you typically share information with courts in other states?
☐ Facsimile ☐ Regular mail ☐ Certified mail ☐ Email ☐ Phone call
☐ All information is sent through the DHS Interstate office. We do not have direct contact with other state courts.
☐ Other _____

8. On average, how often do you have to adjourn a hearing due to lack of information from the other state?
☐ Less than 10% ☐ 10% - 20% ☐ 21% - 50% ☐ 51% or more
9. Do our state laws and court rules allow you to make timely and thorough decisions regarding interstate placement?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. If you answered no to question 9, do you have ideas for changes in state laws or court rules to expedite and enhance the fairness of interstate placements? Please explain.

11. Would you benefit from judicial education regarding interstate placements?
☐ Yes ☐ No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY TO
KELLY HOWARD BY FAX (517) 373-8740, OR EMAIL
HOWARDK@COURTS.MI.GOV, BY FEBRUARY 18, 2008.